



CALF SUCCESS

Timely Dairy Calf Topics to Help You Be Successful



Steps to Manage Dehydrated Calves

1) Determine severity of dehydration. This can be done using the following table:

<u>Dehydration (%)</u>	<u>Sunken Eyes</u>	<u>Skin Tent Time¹</u>	<u>Behavior</u>	<u>Fluids Required</u>
0	Normal	<2	Alert	N/A
4 to 6	Sometimes	2	Reduced Activity	2 quarts oral
6 to 8	Mild	2 to 4	Mild Depression	2 to 4 quarts oral
8 to 10	Moderate	6 to 10	Decreased Suckle	4 quarts oral + IV?
10 to 12	Severe	20 to 45	Comatose	4 to 5 liters IV

- Adapted from: Managing the Milk-Fed Calf in Extreme Weather Conditions – Cattell, Marguerita B., PDHGA Proceedings, 1999. p.18.

- ¹Skin Tent Time- Number of seconds for skin, usually around the neck, to retract to normal once it has been pulled away from the neck with the thumb and first finger.

2) If rehydration is needed: Mix 2 quarts of electrolytes by label direction. Feed 2 quarts of reconstituted electrolyte solution orally using bottle, bucket or tube feeder if necessary. Electrolyte feeding should be done between meals and not within 60 minutes of the regular milk replacer feeding. Do not mix the electrolytes into the milk feeding.

3) Continue feeding regular amounts of milk replacer twice a day at each feeding.

4) Re-evaluate level of dehydration every 6 to 8 hours. Continue feeding electrolyte solution in 2-quart increments depending on level of dehydration.

5) Provide free choice water constantly to any calves being fed electrolytes for dehydration.

6) Consult with your veterinarian regarding IV fluid therapy for any calf that is 10% or more dehydrated.

7) Keep calves warm and dry. Calves cannot maintain body temperature in cool or cold, and damp or wet environmental conditions, making dehydration a much more dangerous condition.

8) Consult with your veterinarian for specific treatment information of problem causing dehydration or if dehydration becomes a herd problem.